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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0542  
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0161  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHMCSUU/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000095

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DEPARTMENT FOR OES/PCI NFITE, MGERDIN  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR DERB, ZHAN, MSTUCKART, JEDWARDS  
STATE PASS TDA FOR LFITTS, PMARIN  
STATE PASS USAID FOR JFREEMAN, GBERTOLIN, GWEYNAND, SLAWAETZ  
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER  
DOC FOR 3317/ITA/OA/KBURRESS  
DOC FOR 3310/USFC/OIO/ANESA/DHARRIS  
DOC FOR USPTO-PAUL SALMON  
TREASURY FOR DFIELDS, AIERONIMO, RHALL, DPETERS  
TRANSPORTATION FOR KSAMPLE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHSA](#) [EAID](#) [TPHY](#) [PGOV](#) [GH](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AFRICA'S LARGEST PRODUCER OF CATFISH HOPES TO  
IMPROVE THE SPECIES

Ref: 08 Lagos 398

1. (U) Summary: Mr. Rahman O. Oguntade, the Nigerian Institute of Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMR) principal catfish researcher told Pol-Econ Associate on February 17 that African catfish constitutes over 70 per cent of fish farmed in Nigeria. NIOMR is providing training on fish farming to 120 youths from the Niger Delta. During a visit of the Regional Environmental Officer (REO) in December 2008 to the Institute, officials of NIOMR said Nigeria is Africa's largest producer of African catfish. NIOMR is conducting research to genetically improve the species. Officials of the Federal Department of Fisheries told REO that the fishing industry employs about one half percent of Nigeria's total population of over 140 million and contributes around 2 percent to GDP. Nigeria complies with U.S rules requiring Turtle Excluding Devices (TEDs) and seeks ways to harmonize regulations, laws and fisheries policies throughout West Africa (Ref). The industry is profitable and has attracted foreign fishermen, but the cost of diesel and constant power failures are major challenges facing the growing domestic industry. The Department is also seeking solutions to piracy and mercury testing. End Summary.

Nigeria is Africa's Largest Producer of Catfish  
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2. (U) Regional Environmental Officer and Pol-Econ Associate met December 2, 2008 with Dr. G.R. Akiode, the Director and other NIOMR officials. According to NIOMR officials, Nigeria is Africa's largest producer of catfish. They added that the institute is conducting research on how to genetically improve the African catfish. In a conversation on February 17, 2009, Oguntade told Pol-Econ Associate that African catfish constitutes over 70 per cent of fish farmed in Nigeria. He noted that African catfish is high in protein and easy to raise. NIOMR raises African catfish and shrimp in fiberglass and rubber containers of about 2 meter radius. They also said that they are raising and harvesting tuna but do not have the adequate post-harvest technology to preserve and maintain proper food safety standards.

3. (U) Nigeria is compliant with U.S rules requiring Turtle Excluding Devices (TED) and wants to collaborate on a regional level to harmonize regulations, laws and fisheries policies throughout West Africa. All the officials agreed that the Fisheries Agreement

signed between the European Union and African countries is unfavorable to the African countries. The Japanese government donated a flume tank to the institute to test the efficiency of a model net before production.

#### NIOMR Provides Training to Niger Delta Youth

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¶4. (U) NIOMR is providing fish farming training for six weeks to 120 youth from Ondo, Akwa Ibom and River states under the federal government's National Food and Security Program aimed at alleviating poverty and restoring peace in the Niger Delta, Rahman Oguntade, principal catfish researcher of NIOMR told Pol-Econ Associate on February 17. This program started on January 19, 2009 and these youths are the first group to be trained. At the end of their training, they will be attached to private farms to implement what they have learned. Other youths from the region will also benefit from this program, Oguntade said.

#### NIOMR Measures of Costal Currents, Shore Erosion

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¶5. (U) NIOMR started a program in 1992 to measure coastal currents but it ended when the instrument was washed away and NIOMR could not replace it, Awosika said. However, from April 2000 to May 2001, NIOMR again conducted a project to measure offshore water currents. This project included the measurement of current speed and direction at selected offshore locations; deployment of surface drifter buoys to define movement of the surface water layer; measurement of water temperature and salinity and measurement of river outflow at selected rivers. In 2006, NIOMR undertook an oceanographic study of

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the Goshen Estate Beach within the Lekki lagoon in order to protect the estate from erosion and flooding.

¶6. (U) NIOMR officials said that they have no access to satellite information with which to map the coast line, lack equipment in labs and have difficulties training young scientists in the field of marine research.

#### Fisheries Sees Aquaculture Expand

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¶7. (U) On December 1, 2008, REO and Pol-Econ Associate also met with Mr. Evaristus Edet, Assistant Director, Federal Department of Fisheries (FDF) and three Section Chiefs in Lagos. FDF is responsible for controlling and regulating fisheries activities along Nigeria's 800-850 kilometer shoreline, as well as for registering vessels, industry cold rooms and certifying export products. In 2008, the Department registered 170 vessels; each operator paid a fee of about N130,000 (approximately USD 1,000). Nigeria's rich fishing grounds have attracted foreign fishermen from China, India, Spain, Holland and Belgium but only licensed operators are authorized to fish in Nigeria's territorial waters, Edet said.

¶8. (U) The fishing industry is divided into three sectors: industrial, non-industrial and aqua-culture fishing. Industrial fishing is carried out mainly by trawlers. These operators are required to respect the rules and regulations contained in the Fisheries Act. The department has recently introduced laws on non-trawling zones, by-catch reduction devices (BRDs) and TEDs in order to protect the marine environment. Non-industrial fishing is mainly small scale fishing using motorized and non-motorized canoes in inland rivers, lakes, and lagoons. Aqua-culture fishing is expanding using new technology that uses fiber glass ponds of about 1.5-2 meter radius. With this new technology, individuals can raise fish in the backyard of their homes, FDF officials told REO.

#### Economic Benefits and Consumer Safety

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¶9. (U) According to Edet, the fishing industry employs about one half of one percent of Nigeria's total population of over 140 million people and contributes around 2 percent to GDP. Approximately 99 percent of the fish and shrimp caught i.e., 18,000

metric tons of fish and 6,000 metric tons of shrimp is brought to Lagos for sale. European Union (EU) standards are observed and most exports are to Europe and South America. The FDF conducts tests in its laboratory and since 2004 no product certified by it has been decertified, FDF officials said. It also tests for metals, pathogens and cadmium from sample water taken from the fishing grounds. Once a year, fisheries councils from all states meet to deliberate on issues affecting the fishing industry and these annual deliberations are often incorporated into national policies.

#### FDF Seeks Solutions to Piracy, Mercury Testing

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¶10. (U) The fishing industry is growing, FDF officials told REO, and faces significant challenges. Sea piracy is rampant, the cost of diesel to run trawlers is increasing, electric power to run coastal facilities fluctuates and no machines are available to test for mercury in fish, FDF officials said.

¶11. (U) Nigeria's 1982 Fisheries Act states that fisheries observers should be on board a vessel but because FDF officers are not insured and do not have their own vessels, only shore-based inspection is conducted. However, the Nigerian Navy is alerted when illegal fishing is reported.

In order to better protect the ecosystem, the department reviewed the law and proposed a participatory management system that considered the interests of other related departments like the marine and oil and gas sectors, Ministries of Environment and Housing, and fishermen, and is expecting its proposal to protect the ecosystem to be implemented in late 2009.

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¶12. (U) Edet asked for U.S. support to train federal officials to protecting the marine environment and to buy equipment from a California company.

¶13. (U) REO and Embassy Abuja have cleared this cable.